The University of Chicago

THE CHANGING FUNCTIONS OF THE AMERICAN FAMILY

A PART OF THE DISSERTATION SUBMITTED
TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY IN CANDIDACY
FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

By
JOHN DOLLARD

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presumably more precise measurements of family change.

I wish here to make formal and concrete acknowledgement of a profound intellectual and professional debt to Professor William F. Ogburn, for making available to researchers on the family, and to me, his functional concepts for description of family activity. Useful concepts are not a priori inspirations of a heated imagination but instruments carefully wrought in laborious research and, as such, they are of the highest value and importance. Their loan lays the borrower under a permanent obligation to use them well and carefully, and if possible to temper them to yet finer usefulness.

The concepts here used are those of family "functions" in terms of which family change is to be described. Family "functions" puts the emphasis where it belongs, on the unified and dynamic nature of family processes and organizes a necessarily static statistical research around a dynamic concept. The concept-functions are not independent variables, but are in cases of given families highly dependent and integrated ones. The procedure here will be to take the aspect of family activity denoted by the proper functional term and treat it at the same time for all families falling within the data offered in the research. Individual and symbolic differences in particular families are, for the sake of clarity, disregarded and left to the more microscopic interview type of study.

We are using the compact definition of the family provided by Burgess as, "A unity of interacting personalities, related by blood, marriage or adoption, which constitutes a household and carries on a common cultural life."[1] The American family, like all other national family patterns, exists in and by virtue of interaction and is a species of family determined and transmitted through communication. It is exactly this relative uniformity based on communication which permits us to deal with the American family as a type and to draw typical inferences from our statistical material. The American family may also be seen as a subtype of a common Western European family pattern; the similarities of subtypes within the Western European cultural area become clearer when the whole configuration is contrasted with that, say, of China. The frame of meanings surrounding the word "family" is assumed to be a common possession in our Western World.

As an interjection it might be remarked that most of the data here given might be handled under a different system of concepts, though not, it would seem, so intelligibly. We might speak of the family as surrendering certain of its functions to Industry, the State, the Church, or Commercialized Recreation, and in certain cases it will be convenient to point out where a declining function of the family does find its more formal social expression. It was decided, however, to place the emphasis on the family and its changing functions

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[1] E. W. Burgess, mimeographed notes on the Family, used in Course, "The Family."

rather than on the social order and its accreting responsibilities, but it should be clear that this study could be viewed either from the outside (group) point of view or from the inside (family) point of view.

Before we undertake to define the "functions" another point should be clear. There is here no propagandistic motive to show the "decline" or "disintegration" of the family. We are interested in the measurement of change and our hypothesis will be set up in these terms. Valuations will be left to the reader who has the courage to make them. There seems not the slightest doubt that the family is undergoing profound changes, but there does seem a good deal of doubt on whether or not it is a declining or disappearing institution. We are as much interested in changes in the family form which indicate integration on new lines as we are in changes which indicate the disappearance of old functions, and it will be the purpose, so far as the data permit, to depict both types of change.

At one point, indeed, in the chapter on the Affectional Function, we will consider the premonitory trends toward active social engineering in the matter of increasing the efficiency of the family.

The definition of family functions will be made in the following sentences:

a. The Affectional Function. In this category are thrown data on the emotional life, in particular that relating to the visible signs of that life, such as relations between

parents, parents and care of children, children and the formal order, care of the aged and dependent, and corollary data.

b. The Economic Function. Here is treated that level of behavior dealing with family aspects of production and consumption, home-ownership, occupations, changing economic techniques and habits.

c. The Health Function. The preservation of the health of members of the family, and the care of ill members, both informally by the family and by the modern techniques of rational medicine, is the center point of the search for data here.

d. The Religious Function. Preservation of religious activity on an intrafamily basis, as opposed to group religious activity, marks the outlines of this concept.

e. The Educational Function. The aspect here considered is that of the training of the child, both in the home, and by the group in its formal aspects. The home-training is hypothecated as the old type of "education" for the child.

f. The Protective Function. Included in this rubric are data on the care of the dependent, defective, and delinquent groups and the changing emphasis on this care as a family activity.

g. The Recreational Function. Older family patterns show the family as a single unit, living a common life, and to a large degree sharing its amusements, or even creating

them in family participation. This area of behavior and the changes in it are included in this concept.

h. The Status Function. The position given to a person by virtue of the importance of his family in the larger group is usually designated as family status. Since no way has been found to measure this highly important function, no detailed treatment will be given it here. It is suggested that family status is less important to the individual in loosely articulated urban groups than in the more closely enmeshed rural societies, but no proof is offered.

In the use of these definitions in organizing data, one constant assumption is made, i.e., that changes in family functions are closely related to changes in the social techniques by which we regulate our common life, and that the gaining of a new function by society indicates loss or lapse of a function, total or partial, in the family itself. The degree to which such a change of locus of performance takes place must be separately judged in each instance, and the assumption can only be used to advance the argument where its employment seems fitting and reasonable.

Summary of the Evidence on the Economic Function

We have already shown in the first chapter the data on the powerful trend of population movement off the farms into urban areas, and the correlated changes in men's occupations from the rural type, centered about the physical home, to the multiform vocations of industry and trade. We meant

to imply by these data that the less essential of the traditional factors in the "home," the man, has taken up a considerable portion of his life outside the boundary of the family. The evidence brought forward in this chapter on the economic function applies in the main to the woman, the traditional home-maker, and we show here that the binding threads which serve to integrate her life around the physical home are loosening as the steady technical advances of our industrial society leave her less and less to do there. Nor should we be discouraged from pressing the point by the easy comment that everyone knows this already. I should assert that no one really knows it yet in all its implications, and further that no one will until history throws the light of its long perspective on this and later, better data. Let us grasp this point firmly, - that we are not dealing merely with a movement in a geographical sense from one place, rural, to another place, urban. While this spacial aspect is important, it is only an index, and a scanty one, of a movement from one kind of world to another; from the rural "universe" with its special set of factors to the urban "universe" where quite different forces are in operation. The changes in "function" of which we speak are largely changes due to the change in the relative extensity of two types of "world." It would be only an extremist, of course, who would urge that the rural world itself is not changing, that it in its turn is not being dragged into the universe of factors operating in urban areas. But we do insist that the differences implied by changing

"functions" of the family make the urban-rural contrast worth keeping clearly in mind.

The data show a strong trend toward the increased rational employment of women both single and married, with its correlate (as we believe) of separate economic and psychological identity of women. In 1890 one woman out of seven was earning a wage, while in 1920 one woman out of four was a bread-winner. In the earlier year one married woman out of thirty was working, in the later year one out of fourteen. In 1920, many more young than older women were working, indicating a possible trend toward a period of industrial apprenticeship for women before they assume their biological function. In 1890 one out of eight occupied women was married, while in 1920 it was about one out of five. In 1929, the ratio was approximately one in three, indicating a rapid growth of the married women in industry, thereby materially changing the home situation in hundreds of thousands of homes. Furthermore, while the home occupations for women are declining in number of women employed, the industrial occupations are increasing. The number of home seamstresses, laundresses, and women servants (working for pay) all declined between 1910 and 1920. The millinery dealers, a neighborhood craft, have also declined during the same period. Apparently, the family is eating out more and at home somewhat less, for we find that non-family food service is increasing. The waiters and waitresses are increasing, as are the keepers of restaurants, male and female, more rapidly than the number of fami-

lies. There were more delicatessens in the later year providing already prepared foods for the apartment home. But let us note that the family still insists on having its kitchen even though it be less in use. We are told that managers of 18,000 apartments report that practically all have kitchens or kitchenettes, though only 6 out of 10 had kitchens, while 4 apartments out of 10 had kitchenettes.

Our one observation on the "Status Function" lies on the point of a decrease in the size of the "large family," as the work of servants becomes more and more set up on the model of factory work. This is shown by the fact that two out of three servants in 1900 lived in the homes of their employers, while in 1920 one out of two so lived. We have further shown that the number of electricians, serving a technically more efficient American society, have increased more than five times between 1900 and 1920, and that between 1919 and 1927 the electrification of the kitchen has proceeded six times as fast as the growth of families. The tailors and tailoresses both decreased between 1910 and 1920, as well as the cabmen who formerly ministered to the incidental transportation needs of the family, but the chauffeurs increased markedly in number, and the architects who help to plan the family home, among other duties, have grown steadily per million of population.

We have exhibited the fact that the cost of raising a child to the family with a budget of $2,500 is now expressed in cash, i.e., $7,200 and we have estimated that this cost has increased by about one quarter since the middle of the last

century. The European "family allowance" type of wage has been indicated as prophetic of the future American trend, and as a move in the direction of support by the economic order to the family. The New York law enabling the creation of building corporations for the propose of providing high-grade, low-rent housing in urban communities is seen as a further prophetic move by the state to bulwark the family. We have shown the marked trend in the increase in per cent of multi-family dwellings in new construction, the per cent more than doubling between 1921 and 1927, with a corresponding decrease in single family dwellings in cities; we have also shown that the tendency is to build smaller rather than large apartments, which have, we suppose, central heating to relieve the head of the house from the old-fashioned duty of tending the furnace. That the family is most crowded in the large city is shown by the fact that there are fewest dwellings per family in the large towns, and further, that the small town family is much more likely to own its own home and to have whatever integrating pride that goes with such possession.

We have then introduced the discussion of a suitable index to measure the increase in number of families since 1899 and have worked out such an index to our satisfaction, and, at the same time, discussed the complementary problem of the use of indices based on the value of product in individual industries as a measure of industrial assumption of the economic function of the older home. We have then selected from the Census of Manufactures the figures for value of product of

certain industries related to home functions and compared them with our index of increase of families. We find that Bread and Other Bakery Products are growing 1.9 times as fast as the number of urban families during the period 1899-1927, that the canning of fruits and vegetables is being assumed by industry at 2.7 the rate that the family grew during the same period, that the index of commercial production of butter, cheese and condensed milk increased by 1927 to 3 times the index of growth of families, that the growth of families and commercial meat-packing has about kept pace, that the use of illuminating gas grew 1.5 times as fast as the family and that manufactured ice is increasing 3.7 as fast. We find further that the manufacture of gas stoves has taken place over the period 1899-1927 more than nine times as fast as the growth of families, that professional and scientific instruments, which measure, as I believe, the degree of technical progress outside the family and the folkways, has grown by 1927 to more than five times the degree of the family, that the index for fabrication of shirts was in 1927 more than 1.6 times that of the index measure of family growth, and that the commercial production of millinery and lace goods had reached a point in 1927 where its index of growth was more than 3 times that of family increase. It is assumed, as argued in the text foregoing, that the assumption of these various selected activities by industry means their loss to the family. Finally we find that the manufacture of women's clothing as measured by its

index of growth was in 1927 more than 4 times that of the growth of families, that the index of commercial production of knit goods was in 1927 more than 3.5 times that of the growth of families, and that the manufacture of sewing machines and cases had not only failed to keep up with the growth of families but that it was in 1927 less than in 1899. The latter fact must be kept in mind in connection with the decrease in the number of seamstresses, and the increased commercial production of women's clothes and millinery and men's shirts.

These departures of activity from the home have radically changed the whole delicate balance of family functions, and have started us on a course of readjustment whose end we do not know. Some of the dislocations and new adjustments will be considered in later chapters. Let us observe that activity centered about the physical home, about interdependent tasks performed in common has served in the past as a most important focus of family life. Each member of the rural family is directly functional in the common tasks which maintain life for all and this common necessity has been one of the tightest bonds holding the family as a unit. When these activities are defibered from the family complex, for both men, women and children, and given over to the factory and school, we have begun a new scheme of the family which will require new devices for integration, now perhaps quite unfamiliar.

Summary of the Evidence on the Educational Function

We have made in the beginning of this chapter a distinction between the transmission by the family of basic affective patterns of response and the passing on by the agencies of the wider society of the symbols and activities characteristic of it. We assume this distinction to be convenient for orienting oneself in a discussion of the changing educational function of the family because we believe that the informal affective aspect of the education of the child by the family will remain for long a constant in human experience. We have also measured in various ways the increase in importance of the formal and rational educational procedures. We have shown that between 1910 and 1920 the school children between five and twenty years of age had increased 5.1 per cent and we assumed that this increase was due to a further progress and more rigid enforcement of laws requiring minimum periods in public schools for the child. This conclusion is further sustained by the fact that the increase is largely in the seven to fifteen year age groups. It is further clear from the data that between 1900 and 1928 the average attendance of children in public schools increased about one hundred per cent and that the teachers in public schools increased in the same ratio, while the number of families increased about eighty per cent over the earlier year. This change is the more significant because we must keep in mind that the increase in the number of families may not represent a proportionate increase in the number of children available for the

schools. In the same connection the point has been made that as between 1900 and 1928 the expenditures for public schools have increased 4.1 times as fast as the number of families, a striking evidence of the advance of the formalized educational procedures. After 1920 a great growth in college and high school students is apparent. We have shown that between 1921 and 1927 the number of students in high schools has almost doubled and the same is true of students in colleges and universities. We commented at this point that these increases in number of students during the later years implies an increased economic burden on society, both because of the cost of their education and because of their withdrawal from economic productivity. It is undoubtedly a tribute to the efficiency and the mechanical superiority of our society that such educational activity is possible. In addition to the foregoing, figures are available on the educational expenditures of the United States as a whole for 1913-1926. We have shown that the expenditures for education doubled between these years, a growth which took place four times as fast as that of the number of families.

On the informal side of family training, we have shown that there is a trend toward education of young children in sex matters by the parents. The Cavan data show that about one-half of the children examined by the questionnaires reported that they received sex information from their own parents. This is probably a case of the parents taking over

a function from the play group under the influence of modern propaganda for child mental hygiene. From the same source we are told that training in the arts is still largely carried on in the home rather than in the school.

The data collected by Freeman and Holzinger has been adduced to show that the I.Q.'s of children tend to conform to the social level of the home in which the child lives. Here it appears that the informal affective as well as the formal knowledge and ability of the parents has significance for the performance of the child. We have also shown that the use of punishment, physical and mental, as a device for rearing children is characteristic of the American family, since according to Anderson's data ninety-seven per cent of the parents do so punish their children. We learn also that most children sleep in beds or bedrooms with other persons and few have beds and sleeping rooms of their own. It was indicated that this may be of some importance for the healthy emotional development of the child. It was shown also that parents are not for the most part curious about improved methods of child rearing. This is to be expected, for in a well-integrated culture, the folkways cover all such points beyond question. Finally we have used our commodity indices to show that the manufacture of printing ink grew about five times as fast as the family between 1899 and 1927 and that newspapers and magazines grew in value about three times as fast as the growth in number of families during the same

period. Additional data was collected from the expenditures of 146 identical cities between the years 1903-1927, and it was shown from these data that the expenditures for schools increased two and one-half times by 1927 the index for increase of urban families; and the increase of libraries, judged by expenditures for them, for the same cities, was in 1927 one and one-half times the index of increase for the number of urban families. It is worth noting that schools do not transmit behavior patterns with the same regularity as does the home, nor do they operate with the same relentless efficiency in producing uniform cultural types, due to the greater presence in them of divergent exhibits of family patterns. We have also noted that one aspect of the increase of the length of school training is that the formal dependence of the child on the family is materially lengthened even while the informal influence of the family is decreased.

Summary of the Evidence on the Recreational Function

We have first suggested in this chapter the conception of "leisure time" as a notion characteristic of our rational society as opposed to the informal recreational devices of the family in its neighborhood setting. We have also pictured a trait of organized recreation arising partly to supplant the older family practices and, once arisen, proceeding under its own momentum as a social movement. We have shown that in 1852 there was not a single muncipal part in the country; that in 1892 only one hundred cities had made provisions for

parks while in 1925-26 approximately 1,680 cities had parks. We must keep in mind, of course, that meanwhile there had taken place a growth in the number of cities. We have also shown that smaller cities are much better provided with park and playground facilities than larger cities, although they would seem to need it less. A rapid trend toward formalization is shown between 1922 and 1927 since the number of trained workers in urban recreation programs increased from 11,000 to nearly 20,000. Very rapid growth is shown also of visitors to the national parks between 1911 and 1929. Using the year 1911 as basic we find that the percentage of increase of visitors in 1929 was about sixteen times as great as the number of families during the same period. A trend in the direction of industrial assumption of the recreational function is also evident as part of the formalization of the use of leisure time activity.

We have further reported on a recreational study of 908 families made by Lies in Indianapolis in which the recreational equipment of the home was examined. From the Anderson study we showed that almost all homes provide commercially fabricated toys for their children and that most of the homes in the Anderson sample reported yards for children to play in, but that over half the children reported on by this study grow up in homes where there are fewer than fifty books. We learn from Fry that the socialized recreational forms called "Boy Scouts," "Girl Scouts" and "Camp Fire Girls" are making very rapid progress in the training and amusement of the young.

We have further shown that the weekly attendance at moving picture theaters has tripled between 1922-1930. Anderson tells us in this connection that about six out of ten of his four year old children had already been to the movies. We have also reported in a preliminary way on the growth of the radio in the home and have pointed out that while the radio tends to center a recreational activity around the home, the amusement activity itself is not of the old family type in which common and creative participation of family members was the rule. Rather, the radio tends to bring the amusement agencies of formal society into the household. We have shown that the number of receiving sets in operation increased over one hundred times between 1922 and 1928. We have also commented on the incomplete figures available at this time from the Census of 1930 to show the number of families possessing radios.

Using our commodity indices we have indicated that between 1899 and 1927 the per cent of increased fabrication of phonographs has been more than seven times that of the growth of number of families. The figures seem to indicate that this great growth immediately precedes the advance in the use of the radio as an amusement device in the home. We should expect to find that the use of hammocks as an aid to front-porch or back-yard recreation of the old type had diminished in the face of the advance of more aggressive and organized type of activity. This proves to be the case. The

growth of lodges and orders of various kinds as measured by the production of regalia and society badges has also declined, while, of course, the family has steadily grown in numbers.

The piano as the center of the family song and group entertainment was discussed, and the Census of Manufactures showed it to be an article of declining importance in commercial value. We have also drawn figures from the Census to show that toys and games are articles of increasing commercial importance, and have indicated that their growth has been, between 1899-1927, more than four times as great as that of the number of urban families. As a measure of the increasing importance of organized recreation, we have brought forward evidence bearing on the expenditure made by 146 identical cities for recreational space, and the equipment and direction of play activity. We find that such expenditures have grown in 1927 two and one-half times over the percentage of increase of urban families. This is taken to be evidence that the family is, on its side, losing certain aspects of the recreational function and society is, on its side, creating recreational patterns which have not existed heretofore but are in consonance with urban needs.

We have further reported on the tabulation made of the answers to question thirty-two on the 8,516 schedules returned to the sub-committee on "The Function of Home Activities in the Education of the Child" of the White House

Conference on Child Health and Protection. We have considered the questionnaire, the sample, and the concepts relating to the validity of the evidence.

Though the data show no sharp and consistent trends, there are rough indications that reading aloud, playing games together, and singing and playing music are more generally typical of rural and village families than of large city families. Going shopping, going to the movies, and taking walks, on the other hand, seem to be more characteristic of larger city groups. The other activities do not show even vague trends. The significance of the data may, however, be viewed in another light; i.e., what are the most important activities in each one of the major groups? We can secure a view of this by comparing the averages of the groups as a whole. Among the American born the six most important activities as measured by the size of the percentage of the sample which indulged in them as a family, are the following: auto rides, visiting, shopping, movies, sang or played music, played games. Among the foreign born the first six family activities in the order of importance are: visiting, shopping, movies, auto rides, took walks, sang and played music. Among negroes the distribution is slightly different: visiting, shopping, sang or played music, auto rides, played games, concerts, and movies. All groups include somewhere in the first six activities auto rides, visiting, shopping, movie going and "sang or played music." These might be thought of as intrenched

American family patterns on the basis of the evidence of these samples. At least 40 per cent and usually higher percentages of the families of each group participated in each of these five activities.

I believe that we can claim, from the foregoing, to see a very strong trend in the direction of formalization of home recreational patterns both within the home by means of such devices as the radio and victrola and without the home by means of the creation of new and socialized recreational patterns. Another way to express this tendency would be to say that "leisure time" has been discovered as a by-product of modern mechanical production and that new forms of play have been developed to meet the new need and opportunity.

Summary of the Evidence on the Health Function

We have shown in this chapter in various ways the great increase in the formal means of caring for ill persons and we have assumed that this increase is attended by a diminished confidence in home therapy. We have considered the problem of the extent of illness and have shown that men have a disabling illness on the average of at least once annually, that women are ill from one to two times a year and children are sick over twice per school year of 180 days. We have recalled the results of the draft board examinations to the effect that forty-seven out of every one hundred men examined by the draft boards were found to have some defect or disease,

and twenty-one out of every one hundred were rejected and sent home on this ground. Data have been adduced to show that very few school children are free from what scientific medicine would classify as physical defects.

We have thereafter introduced evidence relevant to the question of cost of medical care to the family and in this connection have shown that the family at the two thousand dollar income level ought to set aside about $71.00 annually for medical care, while the family at the five thousand dollar income level should annually appropriate about three hundred dollars of its budget for this purpose. The data indicate further that about twenty-eight out of every one hundred borrowers from various loan agencies do so because of expenditures arising from illness and death. We have also quoted the interesting announcement of the "Public Sick and Accident Service, Inc." of Fort Wayne, Indiana, as prophetic of a new type of medical insurance for the family. It appears that in this city for a sum of six cents a day persons may have a complete variety of medical service available.

In addition, we have found that two-fifths of the persons using hospital service in 1922 had such services free, another one-fifth paid for it in part and only the final two-fifths paid in full. We have computed the percentage increase of the number of hospital beds available between 1909 and 1929 and compared it with the increase in number of families and we find that hospital service grew during this

period more than twice as fast as the increase in our family index. It is further a matter of fact that while the number of physicians per million of population is not increasing, that the quality of medical service very definitely is being raised. The number of trained nurses increased more than eight times in proportion to population growth between 1900 and 1920.

A new movement of great interest is that toward organized clinics manned by specialists who are said to give a superior quality of service to a relatively increased number of persons. We learned that in 1900 there were less than one hundred of such clinics and dispensaries but by 1929 "there were considerably over six thousand." We have also given figures to show the increasingly technical character of hospital equipment in terms of laboratory, X-Ray departments, etc.

Figures have been produced to show that the movement toward hospital social service and employment of trained workers in that field is becoming an important one. This is seen as a direct type of aid to the family since the function of these workers is to aid convalescing individuals in various types of problems which follow upon illness. We have shown further that the growth of a visiting nurses service is an additional indication of the move away from the care of unsophisticated family nurses; in the old "large family" groups such types of outside care would not be needed.

Figures have been quoted to show that rural life seems to be somewhat healthier than urban life if we can judge by the fact that people live longer under rural conditions and further that the same differential length of life is true also as between the smaller and larger cities. The death rates are higher in cities of one hundred thousand and over in Ohio than they are in cities of twenty-five thousand to one hundred thousand. Nevertheless, Cavan finds no marked differences in her samples in the health of rural and urban children.

One very common type of illness is, of course, that connected with birth of a child. We have shown that 27.7 per cent of the babies born in 1929 were born in hospitals. This we take to be a marked change from older family patterns where babies were rather uniformly born in the home. We have also correlated the percentages by states of babies born in hospitals with the percentage of the population, urban, in those states in 1930 and found that r turns out to be .78, plus or minus .039. This high coefficient indicates the degree to which scientific medical service is available in urbanized communities and also the marked formalization of this aspect of the health function.

Using our commodity figures we have shown that the commercial production of dental goods was, in 1927, something over three times the percentage of increase in urban families, and that the production of surgical appliances had risen com-

paratively more than four times the increase of urban families in the same year. Both of these types of goods are largely or exclusively tools of a technical society. We have further argued that although patent medicines have continued to increase and at a rate somewhat faster than growth of the number of families that the measure of increase of these medicines is less rapid than the indices of formalized scientific medical practices. We argue, therefore, that, relatively, these home methods of treatment are of less importance than formerly. In the case of optical goods which are another type of scientific aid to ill persons, we find that the measure of their value has grown by 1927, 2.3 times as fast as the index of increase in families. We take this to mean a further diminution of informal care.

Finally, we have exhibited the expenditure for health and sanitation of 146 identical cities between 1903 and 1927 and have shown that these expenditures, as judged by their increase in stable money value, had, by 1927, increased twice as fast as the number of urban families. We assume that these expenditures are both an addition to, and a substitute for, the health activities of the earlier families. There is doubtless a great wave of attention to the problems of illness and disease in our modern society and a new sensitiveness to disorders which would formerly have been considered of minor importance, but we cannot doubt that the increasing medical knowledge and the growing medical facilities of our rational

society have served to replace medical practice and therapeutic aids formerly applied in the home itself.

Summary of the Evidence on the Religious Function

In this chapter on the religious function of the family we have presented such direct evidence as is available and have in addition attempted to formulate the questions which we should like to be able to answer. What we want to know, in brief, is how adequately the older folkways and religious practices of the family are still preserved. We have proceeded on our usual assumption that increased formalization of a function carries a presumption of decreased informal vitality, and have used this assumption wherever the evidence made it tenable. We have shown that during the last three decades the growth in number of churches has not kept pace with the population but that the number of "members" has kept pace with population growth. Fifty-five out of 100 persons over 13 years of age in the United States were church members in 1926 as also in 1906. It is further clear that the number of Sunday School scholars grew about 45% in the same period, or at about the same rate as the children in public schools. We have already shown that children in public schools have grown at a slightly faster rate than the number of families and we therefore indicate that the Sunday School may be taking over a family activity of religious teaching. The evidence shows that four-fifths of the 185,000 churches enumerated in

1926 had denominational schools and that the total enrollment in these schools was 21,000,000 students or 85 per cent as great a number as those enrolled in public schools during the same year. About half of these scholars went to Sunday Schools in rural districts and half to Sunday Schools in urban districts, thereby following very closely the distribution of rural-urban population in 1926. We made it clear that these figures give no evidence with regard to the efficiency of the teaching system but did imply that this formalized type of religious teaching may be supplanting rather than supplementing home religious pedagogy.

We have further shown that 5 out of 9 church members are women and only 4 out of 9 are men in 1926, the same ratio as in 1906. We have also brought evidence to show that seminary graduates are decreasing both actually and in proportion to the population and indicated that this fact is in consonance with the relatively smaller growth of churches. The average expenditures of local churches per member seem to be growing rapidly, by an increase of at least 50 per cent purchasing power as between 1916 and 1926. We have called attention to the difficulties in using these figures as an index of increased religious zeal but have drawn the justifiable conclusion that the formal support of religious activity is gaining rapidly in recent years. What this means as to religious practices in the home we cannot say.

The marginal religious organizations of Y.M.C.A.,

Y.W.C.A., and Knights of Columbus, have had a great growth since the beginning of the century, but all three have declined in rate of expansion since the war. There seems also to be a slight decline in the printing of religious as compared to secular books, and this data may indicate a decline of religious reading in the home.

It is clear that there are more churches in proportion to the number of adults in rural than in urban districts but since we have seen that the number of children in Sunday Schools is about equal between the two areas, we take this data to mean that the country churches are smaller in seating capacity although more numerous.

Quoting the data from a religious study of an Ohio rural community made in 1929, we have indicated that 73 per cent of the families sampled contributed to church support but that only 57 per cent of the families attended church regularly. Of the younger members of these families, about the same proportion, 57 per cent, regularly attended Sunday School or Young People's Societies. It is impossible with the data at hand to evaluate the relative significance of these figures, but they are included as an indication of the present vitality of family religious life in rural areas.

We have also evidence bearing on the religious function in an American city, Indianapolis. It is estimated that 3 persons out of 4 have some actual or incidental religious affiliation. It is further shown that the churches in this city are quite active in recreational activities both with

adults and children. About one-fifth of the churches sponsor boy or girl groups of the "Scout" type. We have pointed to these activities as a new type of function being assumed by religious organizations and have seen in it the taking over by the church of a type of recreational activity formerly carried on in the family as well as a possible diminution in the intensity of the religious activities of the old type. As additional evidence on this point we have shown that about 16 per cent of the protestant churches had gymnasiums, while 4 of them had paid recreational leaders in addition to their religious directors. We have shown that the protestant churches in Indianapolis are active not only in Sunday Schools but in summer schools operated on a religious plan, there being 70 such schools in 1929. In this case the church seems actually to be attempting to provide a religious environment more efficient than that of the home.

Cavan's evidence which is directly on the point of transfer of the home religious function seems to be that the old religious patterns do not occupy a large place in the going life of the American family, and that the practice of them diminishes somewhat from rural to urban family. The Negroes are notably higher in percentage of families following the older patterns. Going to church and grace at meals are the outstanding of the remaining patterns, going to church far leading all the rest, and seeming to show a marked decline in frequency of practice as the population unit increases.

Summary of the Evidence on the Protective Function

In discussing the protective function of the family we have centered attention upon the care of the aged and otherwise dependent members of the family and also upon those who need attention due to delinquency or to some defect. We have urged that in this case the transfer of function from the family to society is especially clear. We have pointed out instances where family activities are taken over by the state, industry, or the church and others where the state has aided the family in the performance of its old functions under new conditions.

We have shown first what the nature of the protective function in the old family actually was. We learned that in 1910 there was one policeman, constable, or sheriff for every 240 families, while in 1920 the ratio was one to 220. The number of formal officers doing protective work is therefore increasing. We have pointed to the Federal Children's Bureau with its extensive mandate to investigate and report as an evidence of increasing concern for child welfare on the part of the state. We have rehearsed the widespread requirements among the states in regard to the regulation of child labor by the establishment of minimal educational opportunity for the working child and minimum conditions of health and physical development. We have shown that the juvenile criminal has become a juvenile delinquent, the new tag expressing a changed attitude toward the young offender and pointing to

the fact that he is regarded as subject to protective and educative rather than punitive measures. The growth of "Child Guidance Clinics" has been very rapid since 1922. They are, of course, socially established means of dealing with the aberrant or unfortunate child. It is apparently becoming accepted in portions of our culture that parents are no longer presumed to be natural experts on child-rearing. We have shown also that the number of Probation and Truant officers has grown from 188 in 1910 to 780 in 1920. These officers of course aid in enforcing the laws requiring minimal education for the child and the fact that they are needed implies that the family is not willing to do its duty on this point. We argue that various types of family rights over the child are now infringed on by the rational order of society operating on conceptions of welfare which are often strange to family custom.

We have noted that the growth of Religious, Charity, and Welfare Workers has been very marked between 1910 and 1920, increasing by 203.3 per cent. We can assume that most of these workers are directing their labors to the rehabilitation of disrupted, disorganized or inefficient families who have in some way made their difficulties known to the organized group.

We have pointed out that in 1928 every American state except Maine and Wyoming had adopted special court organization for dealing with juvenile cases. We have pointed out

that these courts do more than act as formal tribunals for the trial of children's offenses. These courts often have control over the corollary needs of the abused or abandoned child, as well as the family difficulties which bring the child into court. The state is clearly adopting a paternal attitude in its newly assumed interest in children.

It appears that the number of juvenile delinquents committed to institutions per one hundred thousand persons of the same age is declining since it dropped from 171.7 in 1910 to 156.5 in 1923. We have further presented evidence to show that in recent years the number of juvenile delinquents in a series of selected cities has decreased. It may be that improved court methods of dealing with young delinquents has decreased the necessity of commitment. This would seem to be borne out by the fact that in a sample of 27,885 cases of juveniles coming before the courts in 1928, 29 per cent were dismissed or continued indefinitely, 43 per cent were placed on probation while only 16 per cent were committed to institutions. It would seem that the state is substituting its protective for its punitive activity.

It would appear that the state itself is forced to assume the function of the care of dependent children which was formerly easily assumed by the rural large family living on the land. Our data show that 405,000 children were under institutional care in 1923 and that of these, one out of two was in an institution, one out of five was in a foster home

under state supervision and that about one out of three was cared for by the state in its own home. We have further shown that one-third of the children brought before the courts in 1928 were brought by social agencies in the course of their labors with delinquent and dependent families. This fact urges again the growing significance of the formal agencies in taking over protective activities. We have ventured the speculation that this type of state care is bound to grow, being integrated as it is with so many changing facets of the modern world inside and outside the home. We have shown that the new movement of the nursery school has been growing rapidly, though we do not know just how rapidly, 22,822 children being reported in such schools in 1923. This is seen as a sign of social adjustment to the problem of the working or otherwise busy mother.

We have also pointed to the Federal Maternity and Infancy Act passed in 1921 as an important type of assistance to the family in performing its biological function. We have shown that between 1924 and 1929 a total of 1,594 permanent stations were established in 45 states to look after prenatal health of mothers and child health. We have already pointed out that about 121,000 children were in 1923 under the care of the state in their own homes, that is, by pensions to mothers. Between 1910 and 1923, 42 states had passed such mother's pension laws. The state here takes the role of the protecting father supporting women and children who by their

own efforts indicate the social value of their family integrations. This is seen as an activity of the state bulwarking the family.

We have shown that the number of dependent aged persons over 65 was, in 1927, estimated at more than 1,800,000 and that most of them were dependent upon relatives for their support. We have further shown that the number of persons in the older age groups has been steadily growing since 1880 and that predictions of future population show the number of these older persons as steadily on the increase. We believe that these data point unequivocably, given modern urban conditions, to a continuously increasing need for the assumption of protective care by the state. We have also shown that New York City, at least, does not bear its proper proportional share of the care of the aged. In 1920 rural New York had over three times as large a proportion of its population in the age group 65 years and over, as did urban New York. Since the urban population is steadily increasing, and since the city family does not seem to be doing its share in the care of the aged, we argue that the state must step in.

One of the social inventions to meet the situation is the old-age pension, adopted in 1928 by six states and Alaska. In that year only 1,000 persons were receiving such pensions, but we suggest the movement as prophetic of a tendency for state care of the aged by way of recognition for honest industrial and social service performed. We find, however, that 11,269 trade union members were receiving pensions in 1927 or

1928 and that $3,333,000 was paid out in a single year to such male beneficiaries. This is, of course, group self-help rather than state help but it is another aspect of the economic order to which unions of working men are a response and it is a substitute for the older methods of family care.

We have further shown that laws are enacted in 43 states to provide for the compensation of families of workmen injured while at work. While these compensations are usually inadequate to compensate for the real loss involved in a serious injury to the family breadwinner, this fact indicates, nevertheless, a distinct trend in the direction of the protection of the family by the state.

We have pointed to the interesting adjustment made by the family in the form of life insurance as a substitute for the older land-home-family complex. Insurance represents a conservative and adjustive effort on the part of the family itself to meet the problem of old age and dependence without financial aid from the state. We have shown that life insurance, which serves as a protection to the dependents of the insured, has grown almost 10 times as fast as the number of families since 1899, and that the number of life insurance policies has increased about 9 times as fast as the family index in the same period. In the case of endowment insurance, whose purpose is primarily to provide for the insured and his dependents during his own old age, we find that this type of insurance has grown about 6.6 times as fast as the family.

The number of endowment policies, moreover, grew over 9 times as fast as the increase in family percentages. Industrial insurance has had the most phenomenal growth. This type of insurance which was evidently used by some 53,000,000 small-salaried workers in 1929, grew almost 14 times as fast as the number of families in our 30 year time period. The number of industrial policies grew about 9 times as fast as the increase in the number of families. It is suggested that we are justified in viewing this growth in insurance as an autonomous protective measure undertaken by the family for its own integration and perpetuation, and in seeing the growth of life insurance as an urban family equivalent of the old protective factor of possession of land and the large family.

We have also pointed out that the state is increasingly taking care of the feeble-minded and insane members of our society, and therefore lifting this heavy burden from many families and relieving them of such care. The number of feeble-minded in special institutions has risen from 14,347 in 1904 to 42,954 in 1923, while the number of insane has grown from 150,151 in 1904 to 267,617 in 1922. There is no way of knowing whether or not feeble-mindedness and insanity are on the increase, nor does it matter for the purpose of this study. What is certain is that the state is making increasing provision for the care of these unfortunates, and the family is relieved of the burden of this care to exactly the degree that the state assumes it.

We have pointed out, finally, that more crimes are committed in the city than in the country since the cities had, in 1920, 77.8 per cent of the crimes reported and 51.4 per cent of the population, while the rural territory had 22.2 per cent of the crimes and 48.6 per cent of the total population. We suggest that in rural societies there is an automatic protective factor in the form of the neighborhood which stands as a unit against the criminal. Quoting the figures for expenditures for 146 cities for "Protection to Person and Property," we have shown that these expenditures have increased slightly faster than the urban family index and that the expenditures in the same cities for "Charities, Hospitals and Corrections" have increased between 1903 and 1927 more than one and one-half times the increase in the number of families, implying a proportionately greater growth of formal protective activities of various kinds.

Summary of the Evidence on the Affectional Function

In this chapter we have surveyed the quantitative evidence bearing on the affectional aspect of family life and have, in addition, raised some questions which our study has put us in a position to formulate. We first noted that from 1800 to 1920 the number of young children per thousand women 16 to 44 years of age has steadily declined and that the decline is more marked in urban and industrial areas than in rural areas. We further noted that in 1920 the number of

children 0 to 4 years of age per thousand white women declines as the population unit increases both native and foreign born women. There can be no doubt of the meaning of this evidence as indicating a decline in the size of the family. A direct comparison as between 1900 and 1920 shows that the average number of persons in the legal family has decreased for all types of population aggregates. The data indicate also, by way of further elaboration of the changing size of the family, that fewer rural than urban married women are childless at the ages 40 to 49 years. Status differences also are relevant to the size of the family. We find that wives of unskilled laborers have more children than those of professional classes and that farm laborers have more children than farm owners and more than twice as many as urban professional classes. It seems to be clear, therefore, that not only is the size of the family decreasing but that the urban family is larger than the rural family. This we take to be a recapitulation of an historical trend and we believe these facts to show that the movement of larger numbers of families into urban areas accounts for the declining size of the family.

Evidence has been adduced to show that the larger the family the smaller the per cent of the children surviving, which would seem to indicate that the espousal of the doctrine of the large family as such is uncritical. We have suggested the strong probability that the spread in the use of commercial contraceptives is relevant to the decline of

the size of the family inasmuch as these contraceptive devices are most commonly available for sale in cities. We have, however, presented no evidence on this point.

The evidence of Cavan's study does not imply that affectional relations are less close in the urban family than they are in the rural family despite the popular conception of the city as a place of disrupted family life. Sorokin, however, holds the contrary opinion, but does not present the evidence on which it is based.

As a background concept for the interpretation of the data on marriage, divorce and illegitimacy we have recalled the hypothesis advanced by Professor E. W. Burgess that modern marriage patterns are founded on the tradition of choice of partner on the basis of romantic love, with the emphasis on the welfare of the individual, rather than on family choice with the emphasis on group and family welfare. The assumption corollary to that of marriage for love is that the marriage ought to be terminated if individual happiness is not reached.

In regard to marriage we have shown that the per cent of married persons in the population has increased by 5.3 per cent between 1890 and 1920. These increases have come about for the most part in age groups 25 to 34, and increases are larger in urban than in rural areas. Notestein has further shown us that age at marriage is positively correlated with economic and social status since the mean and modal ages at

marriage of a large sample of native white women are progressively higher as their status increases. It has further been shown that the death rates were lower in New York in 1919 for married persons than they were either for those who had never married or for the widowed and divorced groups.

We have discussed the statistics on divorce from various points of sight. We have shown, for example, that in 1928 the number of marriages per divorce was only one-third as great as it was in 1890. We have also shown that the percentage increase of divorces over the base year 1899 was in 1929, 292 per cent. During the same time interval the number of marriages had increased 89 per cent. The percentage increase in divorces was evidently three times as great as that of the number of marriages. Whatever the precise significance of the broken home may be in particular cases for the parents and children, it is sure that this disruptive experience is coming to an increasingly larger number of American homes. We have pointed to Rubinow's contention that about 80 per cent of divorced persons remarry. It would seem that this is a useful and suggestive estimate but a factor of error is unquestionably present in that not all divorced persons so report themselves in the decennial census enumerations. Very likely a considerable number are classified as "single." With regard to the significance of divorce in the life of the child we have indicated that in 1926 in 36 cases out of each hundred children are a factor in the custodial proceedings

incident to divorce. If it is important to have the world of the child serene and orderly, then the growing number of divorces must be viewed as a significant trend toward the disruption of the family affectional life, both present and future. It has been offered on the basis of common sense and some evidence that divorce is more typically an urban than a rural pattern.

We are quite as much interested in data which show social or family effort to stabilize the affectional life and to prevent family disorganization as we are in data showing the contrary trend. Such a movement, whose only purpose can be that of meeting a considerable degree of affectional disorganization already existing, is that of the courts of domestic relations and family courts. Attention has been centered in these courts on family problems by reason of the necessity of improving the environment of the child who is under the protection of the state. The movement began in 1910 since the first court of domestic relations was established in that year in the City of Buffalo. The usual objective is the integrative treatment of all problems relating to the welfare of the child. The courts are usually manned by scientifically trained social workers, psychologists, physicians, and psychiatrists. We have here, then, a highly elaborate technique looking toward the preservation of the family. We seem to observe here the beginning of a trend. We are told that in 1929, 23 courts dealing with family and

domestic relations had been organized in 13 states. The jurisdictions seem to vary in size and be both rural and urban. We clearly see here the state taking over an aspect of family and neighborhood guidance in domestic difficulties, raising it to the level of a special scientific problem and dealing with it by means of specially trained officers.

We have shown, finally, that in a pamphlet entitled, "Are You Training Your Child To Be Happy?" the Census Bureau is broadcasting the wisdom of the child psychologists for the guidance of average American parents. This pamphlet contains not only propaganda for parenthood but suggestions as to training of the child and specific criteria of parental attitudes which are favorable and unfavorable to child development. Such a pamphlet may be viewed as a critique of traditional family practices in regard to child rearing and as a scientific corrective of culture operating within the sphere of family affective relations.

We have briefly summarized the evidence with regard to desertion as a family problem. The data are largely negative in character, tending to show that desertion is not correlated with nationality or religious affiliation, but does seem to be related to low economic status.

We have also referred to the data on illegitimacy as an evidence of the inability of the family to "set" the proper attitude toward the affectional life. The number of illegitimate children per thousand live births is markedly higher in

the cities than in rural areas. But we cannot critically evaluate these figures because it is probable that many rural women about to give birth to illegitimate children seek the anonymity of urban "homes" and hospitals.

As a bit of evidence bearing on the possible permanency of the married tie we have shown that the per cent of home ownership by persons not living on farms has risen from 36.9 per cent in 1890 to 40.9 per cent in 1920. To the extent that home ownership is an influence in consolidating family affectional stability these figures would indicate that the family is at least not losing ground.

Whatever may be the minute effects of apartment dwelling on the complex life of the family, we know that dwelling in apartments has become increasingly characteristic of the urban family. Between 1921 and 1928-29 building permits show that the per cent of families provided for in multi-family dwellings has risen from 33.6 per cent to 66.5 per cent in cities of 500,000 and over. In the suburbs of large cities the increase is more than four times, that is, from 10.2 per cent to 47.4 per cent. In the smaller cities the increase is less rapid, from 8.9 per cent to 16.5 per cent, indicating a decided preference for the separate home. Doubtless these figures will continue to rise in cities both large and small, and we may believe that we are viewing a rapidly growing trend.